

## BEYOND SUCCESS - SIGNIFICANCE CAMPAIGN

### The Karen Schmitt Roberts Internship Impact Fund

Stetson University is moving boldly to make internship experiences available to all students. Internships today are considered “extended interviews” and the preferred way for employers to vet potential candidates. However, internships often present real financial obstacles for students. Donor funding would provide Stetson students much-needed support and access to internship experiences, allowing them to apply their learning in real-world situations, sharpen their skills, expand their professional network, and emerge with a competitive advantage (and often, employment) upon graduation.

Student demand for these opportunities is increasing, and we must enhance our ability to meet it: Currently only 58% of our 2016 bachelor’s degree recipients participated in an internship (*2016 Stetson Outcomes Survey*), while consistently over 70% of our incoming first-year students have indicated an interest in completing an internship (*National Survey for Student Engagement 2008, 2011, 2014*). For Summer 2017, 14 of 19 applicants received \$6,350 in funding; Stetson was only able to fund 13.5% of their total need, which was over \$47,000. For the 2016-17 academic year, funding was simply not available for fall and spring interns. In order for financially challenged students to complete internships, additional funding is critical.

Internships are invaluable. Research by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) shows that internships increase students’ success in securing post-graduation employment; in fact, 51% of interns in the survey accepted full-time positions with their internship employers (*NACE 2017 Internship and Co-op Survey*). Stetson’s own research shows that among our 2016 bachelor’s degree recipients, 86% of those who interned indicated that the internship was helpful or very helpful in preparing them for the workplace and their career (*2016 Stetson Outcomes Survey*).

Internships, employer site visits, mock interviews, job shadowing and other partnerships with employers ultimately help students find employment—a priority goal at the university. Of our Class of 2016 graduates, 65% were employed and 24% were furthering their education six months after graduation. While this is on par with the national average, Stetson strives for higher rates for its students.

Deep and meaningful student learning takes place when students are engaged in educational experiences such as internships that bring real-world relevance to what they have learned. Through donor funding and in the spirit of alumna Karen Schmitt Roberts, more students are able to participate in life-changing experiences that accelerate their learning, enhance their skills and allow them to develop networks that increase their success in reaching their career and graduate school goals.

*For more information, please contact [development@stetson.edu](mailto:development@stetson.edu) or (386) 822-7457.*



*Blair Brannon '17 (top) was an Account Management intern with Saatchi & Saatchi in New York City. Ashlee Renich-Malek '18 interned with the non-profit Sea Communities in Bali, Indonesia.*